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SUCCUMBED UNDER DURESS.

Among the pictures turned down by the jury that sat in judgment on the work of its fellow-competitors for admission to the exhibition by "Chicago Artists," held at the Art Institute from February 3 to March 1, were a hundred that would have done credit to any collection either public or private. Probably there were more than this number out of the grand total of 440 rejected, but we speak of that which we have seen and that which we know. This particular jury was composed of a systematized narrowing down of the more dominant portion of the clique by the clique, for there are wheels within wheels. As the public last year had been given some knowledge of the gross injustice practiced by the art juries, the Institute itself was necessarily compelled to make some pretense, no matter how feeble a one, in arbitrating the jury system for the future.

So in November of last year, it was cajoled into issuing a pale lemon-colored circular, which opened with the following explanations and instructions:

"The jury for the selection and hanging of works for the Annual Exhibition of Artists of Chicago and vicinity to be held in February, 1903, will be elected by ballot. All artists who have contributed to this exhibition during the past five years are entitled to vote and are eligible to service upon the jury. The jury will consist of seven painters and two sculptors, the painters to examine paintings only, and the sculptors sculpture only.

"You are entitled to cast one vote for each member of the jury, both painters and sculptors. A printed list of all exhibitors of the last five years is herewith presented. Please mark an X opposite each name selected, and return your ballot before December 1, to W. M. R. French, Director, etc."

Then follows a list of names of the exhibitors in the

local exhibitions for the past five years, 210—sixteen sculptors and 194 painters. Think of it! Only 210 artists in five years exhibiting in an exhibition styled that of the "works by Chicago artists!" Now this later method of selecting a jury has, on the face of it, a mark of fairness, but to the ordinary laymen and to the women's organizations interested it proved to be a most unmitigated deception.

From this list may be taken about two-thirds of the names of artists either directly or indirectly interested in the Art Institute itself. There are at least a third of the number either employed on the faculty or one-time students of the Institute. Each of these in turn carry weight among those mediocre artists who feel that their professional success depends upon being seen in exhibition in company with those who dominate the exhibitions. These are the wheels within wheels—the sycophants to the sycophants. Mind, all represented on this list are not thus inclined. A few there are who, by the very force of their strong nature, dare to be independent, and in all probability these would not vote at all. One was heard to remark, when asked if he were going to send in his ballot: "No; it will be the same ring, the same systematic unfairness, so I shall keep out of it." And he was wise.

What did the jury of this later exhibition do? Was its methods characterized by fair and impartial judgment? Did it refrain from lauding its own immediate members by allowing no more than one work from each to enter, which is all an artist serving on the jury should be entitled to? Look at the catalogue. The chairman of the jury has the greater part of one of the small rooms to himself. He exhibits ten; another exhibits eight; another five, and three of them two each. Among the painters on the jury, numbering seven, are thirty works, or nearly one-eighth of the exhibition. The sculptors exhibit two, and they are two in number, only one of them being an exhibitor. But this jury is the first that succumbed under duress, and it was a woman that forced them to it.

The artist to whom reference is made had sent in four works. She was notified of the rejection of them all. Her work is so well and favorably known, her "Portrait of American Diplomat at the Court of Korea," being the masterpiece of the fifteenth annual exhibition of the works by American artists held in Chicago last autumn, and of which mention was made in this magazine, that it is unnecessary to dwell on her technical skill and ability at this moment. At that time the Cahn prize for the best work by an American artist was awarded to a very inferior work and to an artist who has lived—and continues to reside—abroad, for the past twenty-five years. The very fact that the work was purchased by the Institute for a nominal sum, immediately after the award was made, is sufficient to arouse suspicion that reflects anything but credit on those immediately employed in the transaction.

However, as soon as the news of the rejection of her four works from this later exhibition reached the artist, her soul rose in revolt at the injustice perpetrated, and although of a sweet disposition, and gentle and refined in manner, she lost no time in reaching the chairman of the jury, demanding to know why her work had been rejected. He had the effrontery to tell her it was not "up to the standard." Urged to be more explicit, he said they made "spots on the wall." Then the artist assured the chairman that unless they were accepted she would have them removed to a public window, and label them: "These were rejected by the present jury at the Art Institute." Seeing that she was determined, the chairman assured her in a conciliatory manner that he would "call a meeting" of the "members of the jury at once," and urged her to take no action as to the removal of her pictures from the Institute until she heard from him. He telephoned her later of the acceptance of one. This beautiful work, "Hallowe'en," rich in color and subtle in harmony, is reproduced on another page of this magazine, although the black and white reproduction can convey no adequate idea of its loveliness.

The artist rather weakened her case by consenting to have one only hung. She should have demanded that the four be given space. But this jury had to succumb and to the pressure brought to bear by a woman who fought her case single-handed. But what a farce this jury-system is! Take the case in point. If the work were of sufficient merit to be admitted after being forced to recognition, then it should have been admitted without hesitancy in the first place. "Spots on the wall!" This is what they feared. A "spot" so beautiful that their mediocrity would be more in evidence.

No member of the jury should be an exhibitor where there is a prize under consideration. The selfish spirit inherent in humanity is aroused twenty-fold by the "award" business. And what a farce it is to say that a man who is appointed to sit in judgment on a brother artist's work, shall also enter into competition with him for the award! Is it not time this folly should cease? What other profession would tolerate such an incongruity?



MUNICIPAL ART LEAGUE, CHICAGO.

The Year Book of the Municipal Art League, Chicago, has been issued and given free circulation from the table in the corridor adjoining the galleries of the Chicago (?) artists' exhibition. A perusal of its pages shows that it has been active in wrestling with the smoke and bill-board problems, as well as with the oft-mooted Lake Front improvement question. The trouble with the Municipal Art League is, that it has, in its ambition and enthusiasm, spread its work over too much territory. It has wandered far afield of the "objects" of the organization as incorporated in its by-

laws adopted February 12, 1902. Article II of these by-laws distinctly specifies the "objects" for which the organization should aim in the following words:

"The objects of this Association shall be to promote in every practicable way the beautifying of the streets, public buildings, and places of Chicago; to bring to the attention of the officials and people of the city the best methods for instituting artistic municipal improvements, and to stimulate civic pride in the care and improvement of private property."

Had the League kept entirely within the letter and spirit of the "objects" thus clearly defined, it would have accomplished more for the cleansing and beautifying of our public streets than it has done. But at a meeting held some time in the spring of 1902 it commenced to spread itself out in another direction, and by the aid and suggestion of a body of narrow-minded individuals, selfish and arbitrary in their methods, we find the Municipal Art League placing itself on record—not as a body of citizens interested in cleansing our city from its befouled condition, but as the direct patron of a clique, which really must be given credit for drawing the wool so effectually over the eyes of the bright business men and women composing a part of the personnel of the membership of the Municipal Art League.

It published an "Artists' Directory," compiled solely from the clique's directory—the Art Institute catalogues—with one or two, ten at the most, notable exceptions. These exceptions could only have been published through the influence of those who had the directory in hand, for one or two of the clique have since openly avowed their disapproval of these names in the directory. Artists there are in Chicago, without "vicinity" artists from Wisconsin, Texas, California and other far away places—as instanced in the late exhibition of the works by Chicago artists, held from February 3 to March 1—to assist in making a local exhibition, but their names are not found in this particular directory.

The Municipal Art League elected an "Exhibition Committee," and through this committee made an appeal to the various women's organizations throughout the city to contribute something toward a fund for the purchase of a work from this annual-clique show. Not less than six hundred dollars of the fund provided is to be expended for this purpose. The intentions of the Municipal Art League are good and commendable if it give the whole of the artists of Chicago opportunity to compete. But when it is content to have men of strong prejudices, with the bee of "school" running riot in their craniums, placed in a position to accept or reject works from an exhibition to which they themselves are extensive contributors and therefore competitors, then is the League fostering a spirit of arbitrary egotism and injustice that is not only unpardonable, but which is the curse that is dragging art local into the basest sort of commercialism and driving out artists who have no